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FORT LOWELL

(OFFICERS' HOUSE AND SUMMER KITCHEN)

Near Tucson, Pima County, Arizona.

~~PHOTOGRAPHS~~

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Redesigned by Howard Draper
Southwest District

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Roy Place, District Officer,
11 East Pennington,
Tucson, Arizona.

FORT LOWELL

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OFFICERS' HOUSE AND SUMMER KITCHEN

Near Tucson, Pima County, Arizona.

Owner: University of Arizona, owner of most of property; many ruins outside University property privately owned. Harvey Adkins owner and present occupant of buildings recorded.

Date of Erection: 1874.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Quarter Master Department, United States Army.

Present Condition: Fair; essentially unchanged except for new rear porch, bath addition, new roof, floor and screened portion of front porch, new stucco on exterior, cement tile coping, new lime plaster on interior, which is painted, and minor repairs.

Number of Stories: One.

Materials of Construction: Foundations, adobe and brick with adobe mortar; floors, pine; exterior and interior walls, adobe with adobe mortar; roof, tin over pine roof sheathing laid across sawed rafters (originally adobe soil on split saquero laid close transversely over the joists or vigas and oiled with Manta); exterior finish, cement stucco; interior finish, lime plaster, painted; fireplaces, adobe; wood mantels; brick chimneys.

Other Existing Records:

Written records, Barnes, Will C., "Arizona Place Names", Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson Arizona; "United States Army, Q. M. Department, "Archives and Claims Branch", Washington, D. C., documents on file with Regional Historian Neasham, National Park Service, Region III, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Circular No. 8, War Department, Surgeon General's Office, Washington, May 1, 1875, "A Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army with descriptions of Military Posts"; Drawings attached.

Additional Data:

The building recorded is the only one of the many buildings comprising the post that is standing intact; it having been continuously used as a residence since abandonment of the fort in 1892. All the others are in ruins. Harvey Adkins, the present occupant, has occupied it since 1928; a family by the name of Gates occupied it for nineteen years previously. The other oc-

occupants are not known.

All the buildings of Fort Lowell, as originally constructed, were adobe. They had no foundations other than the adobe walls, and had no floors; the earth being moistened and tamped made a smooth, hard surface and very good floors. This was in accordance with most of the native houses of that period and locality and is still in use by the natives today. The roofs were six to eight inches of adobe soil placed on top of dried saguaro trunks split into small strips which were placed transversely across the roof beams of either native pine logs (vigas) with the bark pulled off, or sawed pine timbers, acting as both roof rafters and ceiling joists. The ceilings were of "Manta" (common domestic) stretched and tacked to the under side of the joists. The exterior and interior walls were plastered with adobe plaster.

In 1882 new floors were installed in most of the buildings. These were pine laid on sawed floor joists placed directly upon the ground.

In 1883 ramadas (porches) were added to all the officers' quarters and many of the other buildings for protection against the intense sun rays and excessive heat of summer.

So much trouble had been experienced with the dirt roofs leaking so badly during the rainy season, usually during the summer months, that new tin roofs were added to most of the buildings. These were of the standing seam type and were nailed to wood sleepers laid on top of the existing dirt roofs. The building recorded had received new roof sheathing in place of the original earth roof at some later date, presumably when the joists rotted and had to be replaced with new ones.

In 1885 lath and plaster ceilings were installed to take the place of the "Manta" covering which were "infested with moths and vermin".

Prior to 1885 the post had been designated as Camp Lowell. In 1885 the name was changed to Fort Lowell. The camp was named for General C. R. Lowell, U. S. Army, killed May 21, 1862 at Cedar Creek, Virginia. Most of the doors, windows, frames, millwork, including fireplace mantels, hardware and other accessories, were fabricated at San Francisco, California, the Military Division of the Pacific and were shipped by way of boat to Yuma, Arizona, and by wagon train from there to the post. Some were made at the post.

Most of the labor employed in the construction of the Fort was by the troops; skilled labor being employed where necessary.

"Camp Lowell is situated on the Rillito, about eight miles south of the highest peak (Mount Lemon) of the Catalina (Santa Catalina) Mountains, and seven miles east of Tucson, in Pima County, Arizona Territory. Latitude, 32° 12' north; longitude, 33° 49' west; altitude, about 2,530 feet above the sea.

"Tucson, the capital of the Territory, the nearest town, according to the last census, had a population of 3,200. Seven-eighths of the people are Mexican, and the Spanish language is more spoken than the English. It has been a town of some importance for a century. The Mexican Government had a military post there before the country was ceded to the United States, and it is now the principal place for the exchange of commodities between Arizona and Sonora.

"The stores are good, and almost anything essential to comfort, except furniture, can be procured, although at higher price than in the east.

"The reservation extends five miles north, five miles, south, eleven miles east, and four miles west from the center of the camp, embracing a sufficient area of territory for foraging purposes, as well as securing control of the water course. This tract of land, like the Mesa of which it forms a part, has a dry, sandy soil, and is studded with mesquite-trees, sage brush, and several varieties of cacti. It also affords excellent grama and sacatone grasses which are utilized for the cavalry horses and stock pertaining to the post.

"A military post of the same name as this was established near Tucson during the war of the rebellion, and was garrisoned until March 19, 1873, when the troops were removed to this post, with a view to the establishment of a permanent station. This camp is important as a military station because of its proximity to the Mexican border, the Sonora line being only about eighty miles distant.

"The only buildings completed are two sets of Officers' quarters, the guard-house and the store-house. There is in process of construction two sets of infantry and one of cavalry quarters, one set of quarters for the band, and a hospital. All these buildings are constructed of adobes, with mud roofs. The barracks are not yet roofed (Dec. 31, 1874). The infantry barracks will be 145 by 18 feet. The cavalry barracks will be 95 by 18 feet.

"The commanding officer's quarters consist of a main building, 46 by 46 feet, external measurement, two halls each 9 feet, 8 inches wide, pass at right angles to each other through the center of the house, dividing it into four equal sized rooms. The walls are ten feet high, and the rooms well ventilated at the eaves. In rear of this house is a detached building, $33\frac{1}{4} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$ feet, with an addition, $27\frac{1}{3}$ by $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet, external measurements. This building contains a dining room, $21\frac{2}{3}$ feet long, a kitchen, two rooms for servants and a pantry. There is a cellar under part of this building.

"The other officers' quarters consist of a main building, containing two rooms, each 18 by 15 feet, one 15 by 15, one 15 by 13, and one 15 by 7 feet. A rear building with addition contains a mess-room, 18 by 15, a kitchen, 15 by 15, a servants room, 12 by 12, and a pantry $5\frac{1}{2} \times 12$ feet. (This is the summer kitchen recorded.)

"The guard house, probably one of the best in the Territory, is 52 feet square, external measurement, to which is attached a corral, or inclosed yard, 28 by 48 feet, internal measurement. This inclosure is for the use of the prisoners when not in labor. The building has two halls at right angles to each other, cutting it each way nearly through the center. It is divided into a general prisoners' room (with stone walls) $20\frac{1}{6} \times 19\frac{3}{4}$ by $18\frac{1}{2}$, room for garrison prisoners, $18\frac{1}{2} \times 11$, room for officer of the guard, 16 x 11, room for sergeant of the guard, 8 x 11 feet, a wash-room and tool room. All the rooms are ten feet high, lighted by windows with iron gratings, and are excellently ventilated at the eaves. There are, in addition, four cells, each $7\frac{1}{6}$ by $4\frac{1}{4}$ feet, 10 feet in height, like the general prisoners' room, built of stone, all the rest of the building being constructed of adobes. Only the cells are used for prisoners, the balance of the building being used as adjutant's office, library, and quarters for the non-commissioned staff. Prisoners are kept in tents.

"The hospital, under course of erection, when finished will be, it is believed, almost unexceptional in all its appointments; an effort to comply with the instructions in circular No. 2, Surgeon General's Office, July, 1871. The roof is made of mud, therefore ventilation will be at the eaves instead of at the ridge. A comparatively cool place can always be found in the building, in consequence of the arrangement of the halls. The ward will be heated in the winter by stoves, the rooms by fireplaces. The ward is 15 feet in height, thus allowing 1,200 cubic feet of air-space to each bed, if the number is restricted to twelve, and 1,125 feet to each, if four additional ones are required. The rooms are to be 15 by 15 feet, and will be very convenient and ample. The building

containing the kitchen and mess-room is separated by a distance of thirty feet from the main building. In this hot climate this separation is absolutely necessary, for if the kitchen and ward were under one roof, the flies in summer would be unendurable. The ward rooms will be sufficiently lighted.

"The store-house for the quarter master and commissary contains five rooms, each 18 by 18 feet, 12 feet in height.

"The post bakery measures $31 \frac{1}{6}$ by $15 \frac{1}{4}$ feet, and has an addition, for the ovens; this extension is $13 \frac{1}{3}$ by $18 \frac{1}{6}$ feet, external measurement. The building is divided into three rooms; one, the bake-room, is 12 by $15 \frac{7}{12}$ feet; another is $11 \frac{5}{12}$ by $4 \frac{7}{12}$ feet; the third, $11 \frac{5}{12}$ by $6 \frac{7}{12}$ feet, is used as a sleeping room by the baker. The walls of this house are ten feet high; the ventilation is at the eaves. Capacity of the ovens, two hundred rations.

"The garrison has been and still is quartered in tents. Before leaving the subject of quarters it is proper to add that the beds of the men are in wooden bunks, elevated about 18 inches above the floors of their tents.

"There are no adequate facilities for bathing, but these are contemplated in the erection of the new quarters.

"So far, it has not been decided to build a chapel or school-house at the post, but it is very desirable that the latter, especially, should be built.

"The cemetery is located just without the limits of the town of Tucson. It has a wall around it, and a considerable amount of care has been taken in preserving it.

"The location of this camp is favorable, so far as the supply of vegetables is concerned. Situated as it is in the Valley of the Rillito, the garrison has been and can be liberally supplied with these products, without an extraordinary amount of labor or a great expenditure of money.

"The post garden comprising about five acres of excellent land, is located northeast of the camp, and about six hundred yards distant from it. The garden is irrigated by means of an acequia.

"Throughout the Territory it is customary to cool the drinking water by means of porous "ollas". These, when filled, are suspended in a current of air, and protected from direct and indirect

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rays of the sun; evaporation takes place rapidly, and thus the temperature of the water is reduced.

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"Mails are received from the east, via San Francisco, three times a week; from Santa Fe and Prescott, twice a week, returning as often; time from this camp to San Francisco, ten days; to St. Louis, via San Francisco, ten days; to St. Louis, via Santa Fe, about fifteen days. The stage carrying the mails to and from San Diego and Yuma, Prescott, and Tucson also carries passengers.

"The annual medical supplies are received from San Francisco, are brought thence by steamer to Yuma, from which point they are conveyed in citizen trains to this place; time occupied in coming here, from date of requisition, generally about four months. Medical supplies are also obtained from the sub-depot at Yuma, and were it not for the slow means of transportation of all kinds of stores passing through the Territory, that point would be invaluable in emergencies as a base of supplies to the distant points."

"Excerpts from "Circular No. 8, War Department, Surgeon General's Office, Washington, May 1, 1875. A Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army, with descriptions of Military Posts."



Trent Thomas,

Architect in Charge, HABS, Southwest Unit.

Approved November 7, 1940.

Roy Place, District Officer.

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